

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CU-04 OMB-01 TRSE-00 AID-05

COME-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

/077 W

-----021308 161401Z /46

R 161101Z JAN 78

FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6301

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, SU

SUBJ: PEOPLE'S LOCAL GOVERNMENT (PLG) COMES TO SUDAN

1. FIRST NATIONAL CONGRESS OF PEOPLE'S LOCAL GOVERNMENT (PLG) CONCLUDED IN KHARTOUM JANUARY 15 WITH EIGHT RESOLUTIONS AND MORE THAN SIXTY RECOMMENDATIONS LISTED UNDER SEVENTEEN HEADINGS. GENERAL THRUST OF RESOLUTIONS IS FIRST TO DEVOLVE AUTHORITY FROM CENTRAL GOVERNMENT TO PROVINCIAL AND TOWN GOVERNMENTS, SECONDLY TO PREPARE GENERAL PUBLIC TO PARTICIPATE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT, AND THIRDLY TO INCLUDE CITIZENS AND SOLE LEGAL PARTY SUDAN SOCIALIST UNION (SSU) IN EFFORTS TO RESOLVE FAILURES OF PRESENT LOCAL BUREAUCRACIES. RECOMMENDATIONS RANGE FROM SWEEPING REQUESTS, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL DELEGATE "SOME OF ITS FINANCIAL, EXECUTIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE POWERS TO LOCAL COUNCILS" TO DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS ON LOCAL MANPOWER AND HANDICRAFT PROMOTION. ONE RECOMMENDATION LOOKS FORWARD TO GRADUAL ELIMINATION OF ACTIVITIES OF NATIONAL MINISTRIES

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IN PROVINCES, BEGINNING WITH MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, THEN HEALTH, THEN YOUTH AND SPORTS, AND SO ON.

2. NIMEIRI ADDRESSED OPENING SESSION OF CONGRESS JANUARY 10 AND SAID SOUND DEMOCRACY CAN ONLY BE ACHIEVED IF POWER IS HANDED OVER TO MASSES, THAT THIS IS HIS DUTY AND BEST WAY TO ACHIEVE MODERNIZATION AND PROGRESS. HIS GOVERNMENT

DID NOT WANT ELITE TO BECOME DOMINANT, THUS DECENTRALIZATION OF GOVERNMENT WAS NECESSARY. NIMEIRI'S CLOSING ADDRESS TO CONGRESS PRAISED ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND THANKED EVERYONE INVOLVED, FROM SUDAN RAILWAYS WHICH BROUGHT DELEGATES TO "MASSES OF CAPITAL" WHO WELCOMED OPENING SESSION.

3. SUDANGOV ANNOUNCED DECEMBER 15 CREATION OF COUNCIL OF TRUSTEES FOR PLG TO CONSIST OF PATRON OF PLG, EIGHT MEMBERS, AND RAPPORTEUR. PATRON IS NIMEIRI, RAPPORTEUR IS NIMEIRI'S ADVISER ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS, AND MEMBERS CONSIST OF FIRST VICE PRESIDENT ABUL GASSIM, VICE PRESIDENT RASHID AL TAHIR, AND MINISTERS OF FINANCE, HEALTH, COMMERCE, EDUCATION, PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION. COUNCIL OF TRUSTEES WILL BE RESPONSIBLE TO EXECUTIVE RECOMMENDATIONS OF FIRST NATIONAL CONGRESS AND IN GENERAL TO MANAGE IMPLEMENTATION OF PLG.

4. COMMENT: NIMEIRI IS SINCERELY EAGER TO IMPROVE GOVERNMENT IN SUDAN BY DECENTRALIZING AUTHORITY, THUS BYPASSING, HE BELIEVES, SOME OF PRESENTLY BUILT-IN WEAKNESS, HE HAS CLAIMED THAT PLG WILL AID ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOTH AT LOCAL AND ULTIMATELY AT NATIONAL LEVEL. HE MAY ALSO BELIEVE THAT DEMOCRACY IN THIS GUISE IS IMPROVEMENT OVER VARIOUS TRIBAL, OLIGARCHIC OR ELITIST TECHNIQUES WHICH HAVE EXISTED IN SUDAN SINCE AT LEAST END OF TURKISH CONDOMINIUM. NIMEIRI AND ABUL GASSIM HAVE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BEEN PREPARING PUBLIC FOR MONTHS WITH EDUCATIONAL CAMPAIGN. COUNCIL OF TRUSTEES IS IN POSITION TO RUN WITH BALL UNDER NIMEIRI'S PERSONAL LEADERSHIP.

5. FIRST CRUNCH FOR NEW, IMPROVED LOCAL GOVERNMENT WILL NATURALLY COME OVER FINANCES. ALTHOUGH LOCAL COUNCILS ARE TO IMPORVE AND EXPAND THEIR TAX PROCESS, THERE IS NOT MUCH MONEY AVAILABLE IN MOST PROVINCES. WHEN KHARTOUM DISTRIBUTES INCREASINGLY SCARCE NATIONAL FUNDS IN ANNUAL BUDGET PROCESS, DECENTRALIZATION MAY LOOK MORE LIKE THINLY DISGUISED REDUCTION OF ASSISTANCE. STABILITY AND LOYALTY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN PLACES SUCH AS PORT SUDAN, WESTERN AREA AND SOUTHERN REGION WILL BE TESTED. SIMULTANEOUS IMPROVEMENT OF LOCAL ECONOMIC PROSPECTS WILL ALLEVIATE TROUBLE, NIMEIRI HOPES, AND BELIEVES NOW IS BEST TIME TO LAUNCH THIS EXPERIMENT IN IMPROVED LOCAL GOVERNMENT. BERGUS

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